



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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From Proposal to Project: Rail to River Moves Forward.

After heartfelt testimony from residents and environmental advocates calling for the revitalization of an 8-mile stretch of blighted abandoned railway in South Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors voted to allocate \$2.8 million for pre-construction activities including architectural design work and environmental studies.

By acting on a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who has championed the project for more than two years, Metro catapulted [Rail to River](#), a plan to convert the stretch of unused and railway into a greenbelt with a recreational walking and bike path, from a cherished and long-held idea into an actual project.

“Today we set the foundation for what I know will become a wonderful asset to the community,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “It is simply unacceptable that we have allowed blight to not only remain, but flourish along this property, and I am gratified that my colleagues on the Metro Board were supportive of this game-changing project.”

As envisioned, Rail to River will revitalize the abandoned rail road track connecting the Los Angeles River to the Fair View Heights Station of the Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail; the right of way runs through Huntington Park, South Los Angeles and the City of Inglewood.

Over the past two years, community members have come together to envision a walking path and bike trail that will connect this section of Los Angeles—which includes some of the densest and impoverished communities—to the transit system and the L.A. River.

Before the vote Thursday, advocates called on the Board to approve the project, noting that the responsibility for addressing the blight rests with Metro, which owns the property, and positing that investment by the agency would inspire other funders to follow suit.

The California Black Women’s Health Project (CBWHP) also noted that the site of the project is located in an area of Los Angeles with a meagre amount of green space.

“South L.A. residents face high rates of obesity, high blood pressure and other chronic health concerns, and Rail to River will create a vital recreation facility in the most park-poor are of the City, where there are only 1.7 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents,” wrote CEO Gloria Morrow.

Pacoima Beautiful, an environmental education and advocacy group, T.R.U.S.T. South LA and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust also threw their support behind the project.

“There is much work to be done to provide the amount of green space South LA needs and deserves,” wrote Alma Bokde, executive director of the Trust. “...a truly transformative, game changing project like the Rail to River Active Transportation Corridor project is needed to [catalyze the creation] a green backbone for South Los Angeles.

Across the country, abandoned rail right-of-ways have been turned into pedestrian access and bicycle routes -- perhaps most notably on the “High Line” in New York City, which has catalyzed over \$2 Billion in private investment around the park.

The Whittier Greenway Trails, and on other Metro funded projects such as the Metro Orange Line, the Bellflower Bike Trail, and the Chandler Bikeway in Burbank are local examples.

[Rail to River: A Vision video](#)

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